

Introduction: the partners

The [RI Office of Library and Information Services](#) (OLIS) and the [Rhode Island State Archives](#) (the Archives) have long been partners in the preservation of Rhode Island's Heritage and will be partners in this planning project.

OLIS, a Division of the Department of Administration, is RI's State Library Development Agency. The Library Board of Rhode Island (LBRI) advises the Office of Library and Information Services on policy issues, supports legislative initiatives, and acts as an advocacy group on behalf of libraries.



The Archives, a Division within the Office of the Secretary of State, acts as the official custodian and trustee for public records possessing permanent historical value. The RI Historical Records Advisory Board, advocates, develops and supports programs that defend and provide access to Rhode Island's documentary heritage.

Together, OLIS and the Archives constitute an organizing framework that brings together the state's library, archive, museum, historical society, preservation and municipal organizations. Upon that framework, the state has initiated planning efforts that position it to move forward to a comprehensive statewide disaster planning effort to safeguard its heritage collections.

Among the previous results of the collaboration are: the 1992 publication of OLIS' report: *Bricks and Mortar for the Mind: Statewide Preservation Program for Rhode Island*, which led to a legal requirement of all RI Public Libraries that they maintain and annually update a disaster and preservation plan (<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE29/29-6/29-6-3.HTM>). Although many of the recommendations of that report were not implemented, its value has continued.

Other products of the collaboration include a *Disaster Readiness, Response, Recovery Manual* contemporaneous with *Bricks and Mortar* and still in use and the basis of the Public Library preservation and disaster plans; A *Directory of Historical Records Repositories* (www.state.ri.us/rihrab/direct.html) and a stakeholder community aware of the need for disaster planning and ready to act.

In pursuing this planning project, the partners will rely upon additional state agencies including:

-  RI State Risk Manager
-  RIEMA, the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency

and other organizations in the emergency management, library and archives spheres.

Need and rationale: a history of planning

Anecdotal information from workshops, conversations, site visits, and other interaction among OLIS, the Archives and RI organizations and institutions that hold collections pertinent to RI's Heritage indicate a significant need for training and guidance in disaster planning. Existing plans, even in those institutions that have plans, even in those that frequently update their plans (OLIS requires that public libraries annually update their disaster and preservation plans) would benefit from a reexamination in light of changed environmental conditions, technologies, etc. Moreover, through those same interactions (described below), OLIS and the Archives are aware that awareness of that need is high, that RI's ground is fertile for planting of the disaster planning seed.

The State Archives has deep roots and well-established connections with municipal governments in Rhode Island. The Archives' ongoing Local Government Records Program endeavors to ensure the preservation of municipal archival records through a variety of means including providing consultations and resources for

emergency planning, as well as responding to disasters. Likewise, its yearly Local Government Records Grants provide funds that can be used for disaster planning.

The RI Historical Records Advisory Board (RIHRAB), chaired by the State Archivist, has ties with repositories throughout the state. Among the organizations identified as holding unique archival records, manuscripts and graphic materials are 15 university and college institutions, 38 historical and preservation societies, 30 public and private libraries, thirty-nine 39 municipalities and twenty-four 24 museums. RIHRAB maintains an online Directory of Historical Records Repositories in Rhode Island www.state.ri.us/rihrab/direct.html with information about these organizations

RIHRAB is currently conducting a two-year training and re-grant project with NHPRC funds that includes distribution of the *Basics of Archives* (BACE) online course CD and concomitant workshops. Among the BACE components are “How to Make the Best of the Building You’re In”, “Assessing and Improving Your Building”, “Security Planning, and Disasters – When Bad Things Happen to Good Records”. RIHRAB and OLIS have also sent copies of BACE to Rhode Island’s public and academic libraries for their reference collections. RIHRAB has established a listserv as part of that project that acts as a forum. Another RIHRAB listserv carries general communications among repositories.

After the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina, the Council of State Archivists undertook a series of initiatives. including surveys and development of an Emergency Preparedness Toolkit to provide ready access to such as the Pocket Response Plan, MayDay, the Field Guide to Emergency Response, dPlan, the Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel. Through the National Archives and Records Administration and FEMA, regional conference calls have been held to encourage interested parties to become acquainted and to help better integrate the preservation of vital records into government emergency management planning. In the FEMA Region I & II conference call that took place on April 26, 2007, Rhode Island participants included the EMS Executive Director, the Assistant Director of IT Operations & Infrastructure, the State Risk Manager, and the State Archivist.

OLIS is also committed to ongoing efforts in preservation and disaster preparedness in several ways. RI public libraries submit annual updates of their preservation and disaster plans to OLIS. An OLIS web page of Disaster and Preservation Planning [Resources] for Libraries is continuously updated. OLIS and the State Archives recently collaborated to nominate RI individuals to attend the Connecting to Collections symposium held in Washington, D.C., in June 2007. OLIS staff monitor developments and opportunities in the areas of preservation and conservation. An OLIS staff member served on the Society of American Archivists Preservation Award Committee. OLIS staff have participated in the Northeast Document and Conservation Center (NEDCC)’s Advisory Committee since 1992, keeping OLIS current with regional preservation efforts and NEDCC current with RI’s situation. OLIS has distributed over 150 Emergency Response and Salvage Wheels to Rhode Island public libraries and to workshop participants.

The Project; the Planning Process

The planning process will include five elements, 1) define and inventory the universe of RI Heritage Collections, 2) Adapt the NEDCC’s dPlan™: The Online Disaster-Planning Tool to the Rhode Island circumstance, 3) Convene Stakeholders to adopt dPlan as the state’s standard and define a network of response networks statewide, 4) Train stakeholders in the use of dPlan and the RI statewide context for planning, 5) publicize the result of the planning process among state and local emergency management agencies, first responders and Heritage stakeholders.

To accomplish these, OLIS and the Archives will convene a Steering Committee representative of public, academic and private libraries, municipalities, cultural organizations, historical and preservation societies, the State courts, the State Risk Manager, the RI Emergency Management Agency and the partners themselves. OLIS will also engage a project coordinator with broad and deep knowledge of preservation, the planning process and the RI situation, who will manage the consultants' work, ensure participation of the appropriate representatives of the RI stakeholder community, tend to logistics and keep the project on track.

1. Defining the RI Heritage Universe: The RI Historical Records Advisory Board has identified over one hundred and fifty institutions in Rhode Island that hold unique archival records, manuscripts and graphic materials. Among these are fifteen (15) university and college institutions, thirty-eight (38) historical and preservation societies, thirty (30) public and private libraries, thirty-nine (39) municipalities and twenty-four (24) museums. These are enumerated in an online text directory (<http://www.state.ri.us/rihrab/direct.html>) that provides links enabling institutions to be included or to update their listing. OLIS' Library of Rhode Island (LORI) network comprises 174 libraries, some of which are also on the RIHRAB list. LORI includes 51 public, 21 academic, 15 hospital, 78 school and 9 special libraries. LORI's directory is also online (<http://www.olis.ri.gov/libraries/>). Some of the LORI libraries may not have collections appropriate to this project.

To create a comprehensive description of the universe of collections relevant to Rhode Island's Heritage, those directories will be reviewed, updated, and expanded where needed by the project coordinator and technical assistant. This will be accomplished during the project's first two weeks and provide the foundational directory of the project's stakeholders.

2. Create a RI planning tool: The partners will engage NEDCC, creator of "dPlan™: The Online Disaster Planning Tool" to work with representatives of OLIS and Archives to adapt that web-based tool to the RI circumstance. The Steering Committee will assist with this process. Adaptation will include but not be limited to inclusion of RI-specific references in background and information portions of the tool as well as pre-filling of fields with statewide information where appropriate. The adaptation will be programmed in such a way that the RI instance of the tool will continue to be part of the dPlan suite. As such it will be hosted at NEDCC, thereby automatically receiving technical updates as the tool matures and accessible to OLIS and the Archives to update the RI information when timely.

3. Bring the stakeholders together: The partners will convene two day-long professionally facilitated stakeholders' meetings to introduce dPlan, the statewide context of disaster planning and to develop plans to establish a network of response networks. Professional facilitation and a strong action-oriented agenda will make the meetings efficient. Additional meetings may be necessary in order to accommodate the large number of potential participants and summer schedules.

4. Train for now and the future: The partners will further engage NEDCC to prepare materials and hold up to eight (8) training sessions to enable stakeholders to apply the adapted dPlan tool to their institutions. The materials will include an overarching statewide plan to coordinate the stakeholder institution plans.

5. Raise public support and awareness: Project activities will be accompanied by press releases as well as ongoing information presentation and dialog on OLIS' blog and newsweb site as well as on the Archives' website. These will be available via RSS to the public and other interested webmasters. Email databases and the RIHRAB listserve will also be used to disseminate updates and new information. In addition, a panel discussion and documentary presentation of the project and the preservation needs set forth in HHI will be presented as one or two programs in OLIS' popular Cable-TV Series L-TV. Copies of the program(s) will be available to participating institutions to share with their constituencies. Finally, the project will produce

collaterals as determined by consultation with the stakeholders – stickers, bookmarks, brochures, etc. – as awareness tools.

HHI Recommendations:

This project addresses three of the four recommendations of the HHI:

- That they provide safe conditions for their collections: the dPlan tool leads institutions through a comprehensive evaluation of the needs of their collections and the character of their facilities.
- *That they develop an emergency plan: is the primary goal of this project – not only that each institution has a plan appropriate to its location, collections and facilities, but that that plan will fit into a shared statewide plan for increased effectiveness.*
- That they assign responsibility for collection care: The dPlan tool requires specific assignment of various facets of collection care, especially in a disaster.
- That they marshal public and private support for and raise public awareness about collection care: through publicity for this project, public awareness will be stimulated in every RI community, providing increased opportunity for individual institutions and groups or networks of institutions to marshal support and raise awareness of their unique situations.

Project resources - personnel:

1. from the Partners:

- OLIS: Howard Boksenbaum has newly arrived at OLIS as Chief Library Officer from a decade's turn as Assistant Director of Rhode Island's Department of Information Technology Division, where, among other things, he directed the state's most recent business continuity plan development effort. He has been a librarian in a variety of capacities for over 30 years at the University of Pittsburgh, Greene County, PA and in Rhode Island.
- OLIS: Donna Longo DiMichele, Library Program Manager, is OLIS' representative to the RIHRAB and to NEDCC. She is trained as an archivist as well as a librarian. Donna has been both librarian and archivist for over 20 years at the Smithsonian Institution, Duke University, Brown University and the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center
- Archives: Gwenn Stearn, State Archivist & Public Records Administrator is also Director of Administrative Records and Chair of the RI Historical Records Advisory Board. Gwenn has had over 20 years of experience in archives in the UK and the US.

2. Project staff:

- Elliott Caldwell, project coordinator, had been an archivist since 1990 and has held a variety of positions including posts at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, and the National Museum of the American Indian, and teaches at the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies of the University of Rhode Island.

Project resources - budget

The project is primarily seeking funding for staff and skills not available at the partner agencies. The expectation is that following a statewide strategy for the template and for recognition of umbrella services and information relevant to every RI institution's disaster planning, there will be significant savings to individual organizations as a result of this effort. IMLS funding is requested for:

- a full-time project coordinator,
- a part-time technical assistant to the project coordinator
- professional facilitation of stakeholder meetings,
- consultant assistance from NEDCC for adaptation of the dPlan template, training in use of the same and a final report and recommendations

Continuation

Once the planning grant period ends, the partners will be in a better position to continue implementing the RI model of dPlan and promote what this project has begun. The partners plan to continue this effort by seeking an implementation grant to focus on creating a coordinated statewide disaster recovery plan for cultural heritage materials in RI. In particular, the implementation grant will more comprehensively bring RI museums into the dPlan structure. Such a project will rely on funding for development and implementation as well as the institution of a state level advisory body to provide statewide disaster plan monitoring.

Continuing benefits of completing this planning process include:

- The collections that form RI's Heritage will have become part of the Standard Operating Procedure at the Emergency Management Agency, so future revisions of SOP will recognize the value of those institutions and the attention they will require in emergency and disaster situations.
- Disaster planning for all RI libraries, museums, historical societies, town halls, preservation societies and other collectors will recognize the value of and benefit from a standard statewide planning framework, tools to participate in that standards framework, and of sharing
- The State of Rhode Island will have a final report and recommendation to use as a foundation for further planning and implementation efforts.
- Public recognition of the need to support and preserve collections will have been at least temporarily increased allowing participating institutions to more effectively seek support for their local efforts.